

# EMISSION REDUCTION PLAN

2024-25



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The Reef Authority acknowledges the expertise, wisdom, and enduring connections that have informed the guardianship of the Reef for millennia. We pay our respects to the Traditional Owners as the first managers of this Land and Sea Country, and value their traditional knowledge which continues to inform the current management and stewardship of the Reef for future generations.



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# Chief Executive Officer's foreword

Climate change is, and will continue to have, significant effects on the environment, society, and the economy, and the impacts are being felt across all aspects of the Australian Government's operations. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (Reef Authority) acknowledges that human behaviours, pollution, and consumption patterns have both immediate and future impacts on the climate and environment, and that as a Commonwealth entity it is part of our role to mitigate and manage these impacts on our community. [The Reef Authority Climate Change Position Statement](#) outlines in detail the Reef Authority's position on climate change.

This Emissions Reduction Plan, alongside our [Reef Authority Sustainability Strategy](#), establishes our position and commitments to reduce emissions.

The Reef Authority supports the environmental, social, and economic benefits of addressing climate change immediately. We see an opportunity to demonstrate leadership in emissions reduction, and our position is clear: all emissions matter. We can reduce emissions through our daily decision making across the delivery of all our services for the management and protection of the Great Barrier Reef.

## Commitment to achieving Net Zero

The Reef Authority is committed to achieving Net Zero emissions by 2030.

The Reef Authority recognises that climate change is occurring, and that climate change will continue to have a significant effect on the Australian environment, society, and economy.

We acknowledge the central role of Government in driving a successful climate response. Hence, we declare that we are committed to reducing operational emissions, through the implementation of mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Our overall objectives align with the Commonwealth [Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy](#) to reduce our operational emissions.



Josh Thomas

Chief Executive Officer (Accountable Authority)

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

# Emissions Reduction Plan

## Introduction

International scientific consensus is that climate change is occurring and that it is driven by anthropogenic causes, with human activities having a profound impact on the concentration of greenhouse gas emissions since the start of the industrial revolution. Ultimately these activities, such as the burning of fossil fuels, land clearing and agriculture, have increased greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere, leading to changes in the climate system.

The [Reef Authority Climate Change Position Statement](#) details the Reef Authority's approach to climate change.

For the Reef Authority, projected changes to our climate between now and 2030, which will affect our operations include:

- Further increase in temperatures, with more extremely hot days and fewer extremely cool days;
- More heat waves which will be longer and hotter;
- More frequent, extensive, intensive, and longer-lasting marine heatwaves;
- Ongoing sea level rise;
- Further warming and acidification of the oceans;
- Increase in wet season rainfall in the north;
- More intense heavy rainfall throughout Australia, particularly for short-duration extreme rainfall events (storms);
- An increase in the number of high fire weather danger days and a longer fire season for southern and eastern Australia;
- Fewer tropical cyclones, but a greater proportion of high-intensity storms, with large variations from year to year;
- Through a combination of many of these impacts, changes to biodiversity including increased species extinction.



## Purpose

The Reef Authority has an essential role in managing and implementing emissions reduction initiatives set by the Australian Government's [Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy](#) (the Strategy) developed by the Commonwealth Department of Finance. The Strategy is the first of many steps in the Australian Government's approach to achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions in its operations and reinstatement of public emissions reporting.

This plan and the [Reef Authority Sustainability Strategy](#) sets out the steps that will be taken to achieve Australian Public Service (APS) Net Zero by 2030. This plan encompasses new and existing initiatives within Reef Authority to reduce emissions and contribute to the APS Net Zero target by 2030.

The goal of this plan is to provide a pathway for the Reef Authority to meet Net Zero emissions targets through emissions reduction activities.

## Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions

APS Net Zero 2030 is the target set by the Australian Government to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions from government operations by the year 2030. Net zero is achieved when consumption of resources, such as electricity, is reduced as far as possible, and energy is supplied from renewable sources. Where unavoidable greenhouse gas emissions remain, they are balanced through carbon offsetting.

From an organisational perspective, this means minimising the greenhouse gas emissions that are within our control.

## Scope

### Inclusions

Emissions reduction activities will align with the [Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy](#) and the [Reef Authority Sustainability Strategy](#) with the initial focus on Scope 1 and Scope 2 greenhouse gas emissions. Future reviews will consider additional inclusions to align with the Strategy and organisational activities, including the consideration for Scope 3.

### Exclusions

Activities by Commonwealth entities that take place outside of Australia or its territories, including international air and marine travel, are not included in Australia's Nationally Determined Contribution (NCD) and are not included in the APS Net Zero 2030 target or subject to the [Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy](#). The Reef Authority, through its [Sustainability Strategy](#) will act as appropriate to reduce their emissions in the relevant local context as an aspirational goal for the Australian Government to demonstrate leadership and advance Australia's climate diplomacy objectives.

## Governance

The Reef Authority will identify accountabilities and responsibilities for implementation of the [Reef Authority Sustainability Strategy](#) and this plan. A dedicated team of Sustainability staff will coordinate initiatives and provide advice to all staff. A dedicated budget for sustainability initiatives will be included in the annual budget cycle.

This plan will be updated annually, with a summary incorporated into our annual report. Progress against actions identified within the Emissions Reduction Plan will be included in our annual report and reported at regular intervals to the Marine Park Authority Board. This, alongside the [Reef Authority Sustainability Strategy](#) and combined with annual emissions reporting, will be used as a measure of the Reef Authority's progress towards reducing its emissions.

As part of the Net Zero in Government Operations Annual Progress Report, the Department of Finance will aggregate these measures to provide the Whole of Government (WoAG) aggregated emissions reductions activities.

Future iterations of this plan will align with the Department of Finance Offset Strategy and Commonwealth Climate Disclosure requirements that are currently under-development by the Climate Action in Government Operations within the Commonwealth Department of Finance.

## Reef Authority operational context

The Reef Authority is Australia's reef management agency, leading a global effort to preserve and protect one of the planet's most significant natural wonders: the Great Barrier Reef.

Our main office is in Townsville, and there are regional offices in Cairns and Yeppoon to maintain a close connection with those communities, as well as a small office in Canberra that provides ministerial, parliamentary and other agency liaison. In addition, we have staff located in shared office spaces owned by the Queensland Department of Environment and Science along the Reef catchment area, as part of the Reef Joint Field Management Program. Also located in Townsville is the Reef Authority's National Education Centre for the Great Barrier Reef, the Great Barrier Reef Aquarium (currently closed for renovations).

The Reef Authority primarily operates in Queensland, across the Great Barrier Reef and catchment area. On 30 June 2023, the Reef Authority employed 258 people working across all offices. Our offices and the Great Barrier Reef Aquarium are predominantly in north and far north Queensland, which are subjected to extreme temperatures and severe weather events. The Reef Authority also manages some Commonwealth Islands. Our activities include the operation of marine vessels along the length of the Great Barrier Reef as part of the Reef Joint Field Management Program in partnership with the Queensland Department of Environment and Science.

The Reef Authority is committed to protecting the Reef for future generations. We do this through several strategies, including the [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage](#)



[Strategy](#) for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and the [Policy and Planning Strategic Roadmap](#). Other programs and activities to protect the Reef include the [Reef Joint Field Management Program](#), and industry engagement. The [Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements \(TUMRA\)](#) are aimed at providing environmental and heritage protection. The Reef Authority's [Policy and Planning Strategic Roadmap](#) helps to better protect key Reef values, further enabling ecologically sustainable use and work with Traditional Owners and partners, including the tourism industry.

The Reef Authority has already commenced its Net Zero emissions pathway in line with the direction set in [Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy](#) and the [Reef Authority Sustainability Strategy](#). This includes the following focus areas:

## Strategy, Governance and Reporting

- Through this plan and the [Reef Authority Sustainability Strategy](#) the Reef Authority has put in place governance arrangements, dedicated staff and specific funding to implement key targets and initiatives in the [Sustainability Strategy](#).
- The Reef Authority has a specific Sustainability milestone in its Annual Operating Plan and reports on emissions in its Annual Report and has opted in to voluntary reporting beyond the mandatory requirements, including Commonwealth Climate Disclosure.
- The Reef Authority has developed a Sustainable Procurement Framework and Policy available to all Reef Authority staff that aligns with the Department of Climate Change Energy Environment and Water (DCCEEW) [Environmentally Sustainable Policy](#) and [Sustainable Procurement Guide](#).
- The Reef Authority is registered for Green Star and National Australian Built Environment Rating System (NABERS) ratings to provide structured and independent certification of energy use and sustainability in the built environment.
- The Reef Authority has put in place Green Lease Schedules in leasing agreements including Energy Management Plans for specific properties.
- The Reef Authority supports people and culture and partnerships for change.

## Clean Energy and Clean Air

- All buildings fully owned or leased are powered entirely by renewable energy sources (GreenPower).
- All light passenger vehicles are battery electric vehicles.
- Electrification of sites and equipment is standard.
- Energy efficiency is incorporated in the design of systems and facilities.
- New marine vessels are design to incorporate fuel efficiency.
- Travel plans include consideration of emissions against the benefits of the travel and consideration of alternatives to travel such as virtual meetings.

## Circular Economy and Waste

- Use of raw material plastics have been reduced by avoiding plastics in purchasing or using recycled content.
- Where possible entirely natural fibre materials for corporate apparel are used.
- Where possible, end of life of products is extended by using repair options, take back programs or re-use programs.

## Nature Positive

- Incorporate Nature Positive principles into procurements, such as preferring suppliers who engage with regenerative business practices in their operations.
- Incorporate connection to nature in office environments.
- Encourage staff participation in community activities such as clean up days.
- Where appropriate consider carbon offsets for hard to abate emissions.

## Baseline emissions

Baseline emissions are a record of greenhouse gases that have been produced in the past and were produced prior to the introduction of any strategies to reduce emissions. The baseline emissions are the reference point against which emissions reduction can be measured.

At this stage, the APS Net Zero 2030 target includes Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions. Decisions on Scope 3 will be made in the future as further data becomes available. The baseline emissions for this plan will focus on those emissions.

Baseline year	Financial year 2022-23
Scope 1 emissions	1,101 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e (tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent)
Scope 2 emissions	0 tCO <sub>2</sub> e (because electricity is purchased from 100% renewable energy sources)
<b>Total emissions</b>	<b>1,101 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e (tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent)</b>

Time series show historical emissions trends and track the effects of emission reduction strategies. Efforts will be made to calculate the time series using the same methods and data sources in all years. However, as emissions measurements, data collection methods, methodological refinements and reporting requirements are expected to be continually added and improved upon, strategies to ensure time-series consistency are being implemented from the outset. Key to ensuring confidence in time-series consistency will be the diligent documenting of approaches to emission estimations, including methodologies and data sources in the Net Zero in Government Operations Annual Progress Reports.

## Consultation

In the development of this plan the Reef Authority has engaged with:

- The Queensland Department of Environment and Science

- Department of Finance
- Climate Action in Government Operations –to ensure that this plan aligns with the Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy and the Commonwealth Climate Disclosure requirements.
- The Whole of Government Fleet services provided and vehicle Fleet Teams – to transition to low emissions vehicles.
- Travel Team – to discuss options and considerations for lowering travel emissions.
- Reef Authority Property services provider.
- The building managers for each leasing arrangement.

## Emissions reduction targets

To achieve net zero by 2030, we have adopted the following carbon reduction targets.

We project that carbon emissions will be further decreased over the next six years from the current level to net zero emissions by 2030 for Scope 1 and 2 emissions. This is ambitious but will be achieved through reduction in direct emissions as much as possible with existing technologies and using offsets for the hardest to abate emissions. We will only use offsets as a last resort.

We have also committed to reducing our Scope 3 emissions to Net Zero by 2030, which includes marine fuel use resulting from our Crown of Thorns control program undertaken by marine services contractors.

This Emissions Reduction Plan has been completed in accordance with the Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy, associated guidance, reporting standards for annual emissions reporting.

## Priorities and actions

The Reef Authority current sustainability measures have been effective in significantly reducing emissions. For example, initiatives resulted in a 50 per cent reduction in emissions for the Great Barrier Reef Aquarium (formerly ReefHQ Aquarium) from 2007 to 2016. The Reef Authority Scope 2 emissions have been reduced to zero for all properties that are fully owned or leased. Scope 1 emissions have been reduced through the transition to an electric vehicle fleet.

To achieve Net Zero, targeted action on hard to abate emissions and the introduction of further or new measures is required. These actions will include:

### Sustainable Procurement

A Reef Authority specific, Sustainable Procurement Framework and Policy (internal policy) has been developed to align with the [Sustainable Procurement Policy](#) and [DCCEEWSustainable Procurement Guide](#). This document provides a central document to guide staff

on Reef Authority policies and procedures. Links to case studies and other guidance will assist staff to incorporate sustainability requirements into procurements and contracts.

**ACTION:** Tracking of procurements will be undertaken to assess what sustainability measures are being included in procurements and where opportunities for improvements exists.

## Buildings

**ACTION:** Green Star Certification - The Reef Authority Townsville head office is a high priority building for the Reef Authority to ensure that we show leadership in modelling the principles of sustainability in the built environment. The Stanley Place head office which spans three floors is currently registered as a Green Star Interiors project with the Green Building Council of Australia. This process provides guidance and a standardised approach to demonstrating sustainability over a range of areas through the building fit-out project. The certification process will continue into the 2024-25 year.

National Australian Built Environment Rating Scheme (NABERS) – The Reef Authority occupies a building that currently has a 5 Star NABERS rating for the base building. For the tenancy area, the Reef Authority is currently seeking a NABERS Waste Tenancy rating and a NABERS Energy rating. The certification process will continue into the 2024-25 year.

## Electricity

### *Renewable electricity*

The Reef Authority intends to continue purchasing per cent renewable electricity (GreenPower) for all properties owned or leased.

## Solar PV installation

The Reef Authority Great Barrier Reef Aquarium is currently fitted with a 260 kW rooftop solar system.

**ACTION:** It will continue to operate whilst the Great Barrier Reef Aquarium infrastructure is operational.

## Vehicle Fleet

The light passenger fleet will be maintained as entirely battery electric vehicles. An electrical vehicle charging plan has been developed.

**ACTION:** As fit for purpose vehicles come into the market for heavy duty field vehicles, these will be assessed and adopted if appropriate. We aim to revise the electrical vehicle charging plan at least every two years.



## Renewable Marine Fuels

Marine fuels (primarily diesel) are the Reef Authority's hardest to abate emissions. Significant steps have been taken to increase efficiency of existing vessels through modifications to design and operation to reduce marine fuel use.

**ACTION:** The Reef Authority will continue to work with partners in the Queensland Government Department of Environment through the Reef Joint Field Management Program to find alternatives to the use of marine diesel from fossil fuels.

## Travel

Approvals are required for all staff travel. It's at this point that emissions are considered alongside the need to attend in person. Meetings, training and conferences will be undertaken virtually where possible.

**ACTION:** The Reef Authority has developed a Green Transport Plan and Travel Access Guides that will be available to Reef Authority staff to encourage staff to choose low emissions commuting options. The Green Transport Plan will include targets to lower staff commuting emissions.

## Waste tracking

Significant improvements have been made in our approach to generating and tracking waste. The new head office in Townsville has minimal space to accumulate equipment and consumables. A paperless system is standard procedure with minimal printing.

**ACTION:** End of life of furniture and 'no-make good' clauses in leases will be reviewed to ensure that the Reef Authority accounts for all waste it generates. Plastics are avoided for consumable products where possible. A system for effectively tracking office waste will be established, waste metrics will be recorded, and targets set to reduce waste to landfill.

## Information and communications technology

Embodied carbon and end of life is considered when choosing digital equipment and systems. Take back programs and extension of life programs are utilised where possible.

**ACTION:** Assets will be tracked, and targets set to minimise waste to landfill.

## People, culture and capability

The Reef Authority values its staff and culture. We are committed to doing our bit to reducing risks of modern slavery in purchasing.

**ACTION:** The Reef Authority will continue to maintain a team dedicated to sustainability.

- This team will coordinate internal training, identify possible external training and assist the senior executive team to stay abreast of important matters.

- The sustainability and communications teams will continue to promote sustainability, progress and events internally.
- The Sustainability team will continue participating in focus and working groups with other government entities and key stakeholders to share knowledge and develop solutions for challenges.

The Reef Authority will continue to share learnings to provide resources for others to access such as:

[Reef Authority Sustainable Buildings - DCCEEW](#)

[Reef Authority Uniform Procurement - DCCEEW](#)

## Continuous improvement

The Reef Authority is committed to continuous improvement and reaching further into ambitious initiatives and targets. We commit to a system of continuous improvement and will review and revise our plan annually.

